# GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
# ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
# LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:361
ANSWERED ON:22.08.2005
DEPLETING FOREST COVER
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**Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:**

(a) whether the "State of the Forest Report 2003" released recently by the Forest Survey of India has brought out that during the period 2001-2003, the country has lost about 26 thousand square kilometers of dense forest cover;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the details of losses suffered, State-wise, and fresh initiatives being taken to reach the national goal of putting 33% of the country under forest and tree cover by 2012;

(d) whether any target in terms of percentage and area has been fixed by the Government for afforestation in the country;

(e) if so, the sources from where funds are proposed to be mobilised;

(f) whether there is an annual decrease in forest area; and

(g) if so, the details thereof alongwith the action taken thereon?

## Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI A. RAJA)

(a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f) & (g) : A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a),(b),(c),(d),(e),(f)&(g) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 361 DUE FOR REPLY ON 22.08.2005 REGARDING DEPLETING FOREST COVER.

(a)&(b) The State of Forest Report, 2003 (SFR, 2003), shows a decrease in dense forest cover by 26,245 Sq. km. wherein it has also been stated that the real decrease in dense forest cover is 4,605 Sq. km. only. The reasons for decrease in dense forest cover include shifting cultivation, encroachments, felling of short rotation tree crops, diversion of forest land for developmental activities etc. The decrease of 21,640 Sq. km. is due to interpretational corrections mostly in 1 to 25 ha. patches outside the recorded forests such as crops like cotton, sugarcane, groundnut etc. which give reflectance similar to that of forest cover.

(c) The details of losses suffered, States-wise are given in Annexure.

The initiatives being taken to increase forest and tree cover to 33% by the year 2012, are: -

(i) Consultation with the State Governments and Union Territories Administrations and other Ministries have been held to sensitize them of the increased tree planting targets.

(ii) Guidelines for rationalizing of felling and transit regulations for tree species grown on non-forest private lands have been issued, to promote large scale afforestation in non-forest areas.

(iii) State Government and Union Territories Administrations have been requested to formulate and implement Media Plan to create mass awareness about tree plantation.

(iv) In National Afforestation Programme, a new component has been added to extend Joint Forest Management to around 1.73 lakh forest fringe villages in the country to reverse the process of forest degradation and encourage afforestation.

(v) Grants-in-Aid for Greening India Scheme has been launched in 2005-06 to cover the activities of awareness generation, setting up of high-tech central nurseries and satellite nurseries to ensure availability of quality planting materials for tree plantation.

(d) The 10th Five Year Plan envisages an increase in the forest and tree cover to 25% by 2007 and 33% by 2012. To help achieve this, tree planting targets are fixed under point 16A and 16B of 20-point programme on an annual basis. For the current year 2005-2006, the targets are 12,560 lakhs seedlings under 16A and 16,29,475 hectares under 16B.

(e) Besides providing Central financial assistance, State Governments and Union Territory Administrations have been requested to constitute coordination committees of all departments owning lands chaired by the Chief Secretary of the concerned State to take up increased tree planting.

The funds are expected to flow from budgetary support by Central and State Governments to various Departments and Ministries. The liberalization and rationalization of regulations are also expected to provide fillip to the flow of funds from various stakeholders.

(f) No, Sir. The forest area and the forest & tree cover have been increasing as per the State of Forest Report, 2003, a biennial report published by Forest Survey of India (FSI):

| Year | Recorded Forest Area (in Sq. km.) | Forest & Tree Cover (in Sq. km.) | Percentage of Geographical area of the country (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2001 | 768,436 | 757,009 | 23.03 |
| 2003 | 774,740 | 778,229 | 23.68 |

(g) Does not arise.

ANNEXURE

ANNEXURE IN RESPECT OF PART (C) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 361 FOR 22.08.2005 REGARDING DEPLETING DENSE FOREST COVER

(Area in Sq. Km.)

| State/UT | Real | Interpre-tational | Total Change in Dense Forest (both real & interpretational) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Andhra Pradesh | -5.64 | -1442 | -1,448 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | -2136 | 1715 | -421 |
| Assam | -363.86 | -2424 | -2,788 |
| Bihar | -0.23 | -345 | -345 |
| Chhattisgarh | -182 | 1282 | 1,100 |
| Delhi | 0 | 14 | 14 |
| Goa | 0 | -530 | -530 |
| Gujarat | -89 | -2239 | -2,328 |
| Haryana | -0.14 | -619 | -619 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 0 | -1453 | -1,453 |
| Jammu & Kashmir | 0 | -1351 | -1,351 |
| Jharkhand | 0 | -106 | -106 |
| Karnataka | 0 | -3695 | -3,695 |
| Kerala | -1 | -2143 | -2,144 |
| Madhya Pradesh | -558 | -1983 | -2,541 |
| Maharashtra | -65.32 | -2442 | -2,507 |
| Manipur | -135 | 963 | 828 |
| Meghalaya | -141 | 951 | 810 |
| Mizoram | -351 | -1097 | -1,448 |
| Nagaland | -321 | 635 | 314 |
| Orissa | -8 | 206 | 198 |
| Punjab | -2 | -804 | -806 |
| Rajasthan | -1 | -1825 | -1,826 |
| Sikkim | 0 | -29 | -29 |
| Tamil Nadu | -2 | -490 | -492 |
| Tripura | -221 | 1804 | 1,583 |
| Uttar Pradesh | -1.05 | -2968 | -2,969 |
| Uttaranchal | -16.88 | -584 | -601 |
| West Bengal | 0 | -301 | -301 |
| A & Nicobar Islands | 0 | -309 | -309 |
| Chandigarh | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| D & Nagar Haveli | -4 | -2 | -6 |
| Daman & Diu | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Lakshadweep | 0 | -15 | -15 |
| Pondicherry | 0 | -18 | -18 |

Total -4605.12 -21640 -26,245

Net Change in forest cover in the country since 2001 assessment

(Area in Sq. Km.)

| Assessment Year | Dense Forest | Open Forest | Total Forest Cover |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2001 | 416,809 | 258,729 | 675,538 |
| 2003 | 390,564 | 287,769 | 678,333 |
| Change | -26,245 | 29,040 | 2,795 |